



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

## **SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR FAMILY SUPPORT AND LITERACY**

First Things First (Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board) is a public agency that exists to increase the quality of, and access to, the early childhood development and health system that ensures a child entering school comes healthy and ready to succeed. Passed by voter initiative in 2006, First Things First operates through a tax on tobacco products. Governed by a state board and 31 Regional Partnership Councils, First Things First engages diverse constituencies across the state to accomplish its mission. Organizational values include a child and family centered focus that is coordinated and collaborative; a comprehensive systems approach with continuous inquiry, learning and reflection; and, transparency and strong accountability toward achieving outcomes that will ensure all young children start kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. First Things First acts in accordance with our Beliefs, Actions and Performance statements, which are attached.

### **Position Summary**

The First Things First Senior Director for Family Support and Literacy works independently and in agreement with the Chief Program Officer, the Chief Executive Officer and organizational leadership to recommend, develop, implement and monitor exemplary family support and literacy policy initiatives and programs to achieve the priority goals of the agency. The Senior Director is an expert in the family support and early literacy fields, and leads First Things First policy and program development related to home visiting, parent awareness and education, family resource centers, acquisition of oral language, vocabulary development and pre-reading skills in young children, and information and education for families on early screening, identification and interventions for developmental delay and special health care needs. The Senior Director also directs development of short and long-term indicators and benchmarks; research on effective practices that are responsive to diverse cultures and communities; design, implementation and monitoring of programs and services at the system, statewide, and local levels; and, training and technical assistance on family support and literacy initiatives and programs. This position is critical in statewide systems planning and proposes and advances solutions that positively impact and enhance a coordinated state early childhood development and health system. The Senior Director for Family Support and Literacy reports directly to the Chief Program Officer. This position requires approximately 20% travel throughout the state.

### **Distinguishing Characteristics**

The ideal candidate enthusiastically supports the vision and mission of First Things First, and possesses the personal qualities of integrity, credibility and competency. She/he is an early childhood and family support systems thinker and leader and has a proven track record of coordinating and collaborating with diverse constituencies, organizations and agencies across Arizona. The candidate demonstrates obvious understanding of and comfort in working in a decentralized, transparent organization.

### **Primary Responsibilities**

- Lead the development of long-term strategies and implementation of services and programs in the area of family support and literacy that improve children's readiness for kindergarten entry.
- Ensure FTF Standards of Practice for family support and literacy strategies appropriately address information and education for families on early screening, identification and interventions for developmental delay and special health care needs.
- Administer programmatic quality assurance and technical assistance efforts for all family support and literacy strategies.
- Accurately measure and report progress of FTF programmatic priorities related to family support and literacy.
- Lead FTF support for statewide and multi-regional capacity building and coordination in family support and literacy strategies and programs.
- Ensure short and long-term strategic plan objectives are achieved to support division and organizational goals.
- Provide primary support to the Family Support and Literacy Policy Advisory Committee of the Early Childhood Development and Health Board.
- Lead the Family Support and Literacy strategy workgroup and facilitate a Family Support and Literacy learning community for the FTF organization.
- Facilitate the Family Support and Literacy team in providing excellent service and support for the FTF Regional Partnership Councils and the Board.
- Provide effective team leadership; select and retain qualified staff to ensure the provision of high-quality services in a manner consistent with the principles of the FTF organizational culture.
- Assure that financial oversight and program budgeting for family support and literacy is rigorous, meets fiscal and organizational guidelines and reflects the values and priorities of FTF.
- Contribute to the planning, development, training and implementation of policies, procedures and practices for the Program Division to ensure high quality and efficient services are provided.
- Employ regular cross-divisional communication within the Program Division and with all FTF Divisions.
- Make recommendations to and keep the Chief Program Officer informed on the programmatic operations, issues and needs of the Family Support and Literacy team.
- Represent the Family Support and Literacy team on the Chief Executive Officer's Management Team.
- Coordinate and collaborate with external customers including local partnership council staff and volunteers, board members, state agency and tribal representatives, committee members, contractors and outside service vendors and other community stakeholders.
- Identify areas for self-improvement in order to perform assigned projects and carry out responsibilities to meet desired outcomes; actively pursue appropriate means and methods to increase effectiveness in those areas.

## Qualifications

- Thorough knowledge and a minimum 10 years previous experience in family support and literacy policy issues, including information and education for families on early screening, identification and interventions for developmental delay and special health care needs, and their relationship with early learning and children's health policy issues and effective practices at the state and national level.
- Thorough knowledge and previous experience in early childhood systems and service delivery; program development, implementation and monitoring; early childhood research and research methods; and, effective professional development and technical assistance practices that result in high quality opportunities to improve support for families and their children's early literacy.
- Commitment to a comprehensive systems approach and organizational planning that focus on clear priorities, realistic expectations and vigorous assessment.
- Knowledge and prior experience in financial and budgeting principles, contract management, and grant writing and administration.
- Strong team leadership, organizational, management and supervisory skills.
- Experienced facilitation and group leadership skills that result in collaborative success and desired outcomes while working with staff, volunteers, parents, family support and literacy professionals and providers, community leaders, governmental officials, tribal partners, public and private entities and faith based groups in communities throughout the state.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong interpersonal relations and oral communication skills necessary to effectively articulate program goals with sensitivity to ethnic, cultural and local community differences.
- Entrepreneurial style and innovative ability to think critically and address problems resourcefully.
- Ability to promote and achieve a broad diversity of thought, background, ethnicity and perspective in providing assistance and resources.
- Commitment to uphold high ethical standards and promote sound business practices.
- History of creating and fostering a mutually respectful work place environment where diverse contributions and perspectives are valued.
- Ability to ensure public transparency and accountability, as well as measure and improve outcomes appropriate for organizational goals.
- Agility and capability to work within a fast-moving environment, while also driving toward clarity and solutions; demonstrated resourcefulness in setting priorities.
- Technical skills that ensure effective use of computer hardware and software and other communication devices.
- Masters or doctorate degree preferred from an accredited college or university in social work, family studies, early childhood education or special education, early childhood development, public policy or related field.
- Background of progressively responsible leadership positions in public, private or non-profit organizations, with experience in public policy and program development in family support and literacy services for young children and their families.

Review of resumes will begin on Wednesday, November 9, 2011 and continue until the position is filled. For consideration please submit a cover letter, comprehensive resume and three professional references to:

[www.azstatejobs.gov](http://www.azstatejobs.gov)

This position is not covered by the State Personnel Merit System, but the State of Arizona provides a comprehensive benefits package, including a top-rank retirement plan, low cost health and dental coverage, supplemental policies such as vision and short-term disability, and generous leave programs. Salary range for this position is \$75,000 to \$95,000.